

as important empirical studies across multiple disciplines. The great strength of the book is, however, its detailed analysis and explication of time use survey data. Throughout, multivariate techniques are used to probe beneath the surface picture provided by conventional, more limited analyses that focus on 'primary' activities. This is especially illuminating given that so much child care is performed as a 'secondary' or simultaneous activity alongside other paid and unpaid work, and reveals not only expected, but also some counterintuitive, facts about modern families. For example, we learn that surprisingly, lone mothers spend relatively little more time in child care than partnered mothers, and that they actually get more leisure time away from children. Other analyses focus on the relative contribution of fathers and mothers to different aspects of child rearing. They show that fathers in two parent families tend to spend more of their time with children in the more rewarding, interactive, time-flexible aspects of child care such as playing and talking, whilst mothers spend a higher proportion of their time providing physical care and engaged in routinized child care tasks such as preparing meals. Craig's contention – that fathers still tend to assist with child care rather than take responsibility for it – is further underpinned by comparison of the relative amounts of time spent in the sole company of children. It makes thought-provoking reading in the context of an increasing body of literature on the importance of father involvement to child development.

The book is helpfully structured, with a clear method and data chapter at the outset. Subsequent chapters proceed from overarching analysis to a detailed unpicking of gender and social class differences that are masked by the overarching picture. Chapter 3 sets out the time implications of parenting generally (for both men and women), showing how the birth of the first child substantially increases adult workload and how activities like sleep, personal care and leisure are traded for time with children. Chapters 4 and 5 explore gender disparities. Here, Craig sets up a strong counterargument to the thesis that modern couples are increasingly convergent in the amount of time they give to housework and child care. She suggests that this is mistaken interpretation of time use survey data, which fails to take into account the hidden effect of 'time-deepening' (i.e. multi-tasking, doing several things at once) in which mothers disproportionately engage as they attempt to give time to paid work as well as unpaid domestic work and child care. Relevant to debates about the potentially deleterious effects on children of parents' use of paid child

care, Craig also provides an interesting discussion of how working mothers protect 'quality time' (interactive and physical care) with children, squeezing it into long days that start earlier and end later than those of childless adults. Chapter 6 explores how educational differences modify the pattern. The conclusion that better educated fathers do not 'extend the repertoire' of fathering but continue to take a smaller share of the less rewarding aspects of child care is sobering. Chapter 7 provides a comparison of the Australian data against data from Norway, Germany and Italy as examples of countries with contrasting welfare regimes and differing relationships between state and family. Though tantalizingly short, this chapter prompts reflection on the important role of social policy in supporting parents, and women in particular.

Overall, this is a thoughtful and dispassionate account grounded in solid empirical research. It is relevant to a number of domains of social policy and deserves to be widely read.

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Youth Offending in Transition: The Search for Social Recognition

Monica Barry

Routledge, London, 2006, 214 pp. £20.99. ISBN 978 0415 36792 9

This book – based on the author's recently completed PhD thesis – reports on a study of 40 respondents (20 males and 20 females) and their efforts to stop offending. The fieldwork was conducted in Scotland during 2001. The book includes sections on the onset of offending, the maintenance of offending and their eventual cessation of offending. The material drawn upon is entirely qualitative (being excerpts from the interviews with the young men and women, aged 18–33 at the time of the interview). Monica Barry relies upon Bourdieu's theoretical work to help her make sense of the interview material.

In a nutshell (which is always slightly unfair to books), it is Barry's contention that young people start to offend because they lack 'social recognition' ('the attainment of a durable and legitimate combination of capital accumulation and expenditure', p. 2 – i.e. they are not full citizens in society), and that they cease to offend because they are provided with the opportuni-

ties to expend capital (such as seeking custody of their children, looking after parents or taking responsibility for their homes – see the case of Yvonne, p. 148). Young people are inherently powerless in Barry's schema, and they attempt to gain power by creating social, cultural, economic and symbolic power for themselves by offending (see the case of Pete, p. 50). They therefore make the move away from offending as they accumulate more legitimate forms of capital and ways of spending these.

I must admit, I am not sure that I fully agree that the reasons why these people who (or anyone else) stopped offending can easily be reduced to this schema. True, people do start to gain economic resources as they leave adolescence behind and enter work, and they do find it rewarding to spend these resources – but they are just as likely to spend some of their hard earned cash on 'shady' goods as they are on legitimate ones. As an explanation of why these people stopped offending, I preferred the actor's voices themselves (and Barry wisely devotes a lot of space to allowing her interviewees to speak for themselves). However, these voices speak to a subtly different and more nuanced set of awareness and feelings than the rather over-burdening 'forms of capital' analysis provided. Amongst these voices we find regrets about past events, experiences of shock, the overcoming of stigma and so on. There are not very many differences between those who continued to offend and those who ceased offending (see the case studies pp. 148–153, which left me feeling that some of these desisters were rather precariously placed). It feels, in places, as if the theory has been too heavily used – or imposed on the data post-collection and design (which is hinted at, p. 147). Rather than providing insight into the processes associated with desistance, the theory seems to have been the *only* lense through which the topic was approached. This is a great shame as it leaves the book – an otherwise enlightening read – with a slanted view of what is going on when people leave crime behind. For example, there is no discussion of the role of hope in the processes associated with desistance, despite the fact that a number of authors have started to point towards this – and other emotions – as a key factor (e.g. Giordano *et al.* 2002; Burnett & Maruna 2004). Another slightly strange aspect of the book is the importance placed upon making a decision to stop offending – which brought to mind rational choice theories of desistance (e.g. Clarke & Cornish 1985; Cusson & Pinsonneault 1986) that fell out of fashion some years ago.

There is another process – always much harder to get at with qualitative data – which haunts some of this too. On p. 28 we are reminded of one of the critiques of 1980s' youth transitions research: namely that it focused on structures rather than on agents. Here we have, not quite the reverse (for the reason that Barry focuses on some structural issues), but certainly an omission when it comes to some of the background to the lives of the respondents. Aged between 18 and 33 in 2001, these people were born in Scotland between 1968 and 1983. In other words, into a heavily industrialized but rapidly de-industrializing society at a time when severe cuts were being made to local employment changes for young men. Work provides more than just cash – it provides a sense of future and of purpose. For some of the females in the study, not only would they have worked themselves, but they would have expected to have been provided for by (employed) partners. Between their parents' careers and their own, these people lost so much. You only needed to visit parts of Glasgow, Airdrie or Motherwell in the late 1980s and 1990s to see this for yourself – empty railway sidings, disused British Steel plants, abandoned factories. And with this went some of what would have become some of these people's dreams, hopes and fears. Yet this aspect of their lives is not referred to. Perhaps those interviewed came from elsewhere – we know only that they came from Scotland (pp. 172–73) and were recruited from probation projects there.

And this brings me to what I consider to be another omission – the lack of reference to either probation or social work interventions in the lives of these people. It would not surprise me much to learn that such interventions had been less than successful from the perspectives of those interviewed. However, it would have been interesting to see some discussion of what could be done (both north and south of the border) by probation and social workers to assist those wishing to stop offending. There is some tremendously citing work (see e.g. those publications on desistance-focussed interventions or those on the strengths-based approach) being developed by some of those studying desistance, and this would have been an ideal opportunity to discuss such developments in the light of the findings and theorizing reported on herein. I hope that Barry will develop her thoughts on these issues in her future publications – certainly there is a need for further critical thinking in this arena and I am sure she will be able to contribute to these debates.

Despite the general tenor of these comments, which must appear overly nit-picky and dismissive, I enjoyed

reading the book. For those, like me, who are interested in why people stop offending, there are some useful pointers to aspects of the processes associated with desistance. This is an ambitious piece of work that tackles a rapidly growing body of work using relatively new ideas and with a good presentation of data. As such it is a welcome addition to the literature and I recommend it to anyone interested in why people stop offending.

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Safer Caring: A Training Programme

Kate Cairns and Eileen Fursland

British Association of Adoption and Fostering, London, 2007, 65 pp & CD-ROM. £39.95. ISBN 978 1 905664 023

What training do foster carers really need? Kate Cairns is an experienced foster carer and social worker and in her recent publication: *Safer Caring: A Training Programme*, she provides, with her collaborator, Eileen Fursland, an interesting rearrangement of the usual priorities that influence training programmes for foster carers. In *Safer Caring*, the courses that comprise the training programme are geared primarily towards the emotional aches of carers and the improvement of foster carer skills and abilities is a secondary consideration.

The programme is divided into four sessions, each requiring about 3 hours of training time. It offers training providers ways of engaging with carers over fascinating and very well chosen issues either in stand-alone sessions or in various combinations. Each section consists of a series of PowerPoint slides,

exercises for trainees and supporting information for trainers and there are two handouts providing greater depth of information about brain functions and a useful case study.

In Part 1 Session A the focus is on the difficulties of traumatized children, supplying a model of physiological responses to trauma and then describing some of the effects of trauma on physical, cognitive, emotional and social functioning. Then, in Session B, caring for carers occupies the foreground through a model of secondary traumatic stress disorder (STSD), which from then on, is at the heart of the training. The authors show how STSD can threaten the health, functioning and safety of foster carers, how it can be alleviated by therapies of various kinds – a slightly New Age feel here, but only briefly – and finally introduce the ways care agencies organize to deal with STSD.

It becomes clear in Part 2 of the manual that Cairns and Fursland are concerned about the implications of STSD not only for carers' health but for their public accountability because the condition undermines vital skills and increases the possibility of family members being provoked into abusing the child. Their answer is to identify risk management issues as salient within the multitude of fostering tasks. The manual breaks risk assessment into a large number of elements, to be worked at in sequence. The outcomes of the exercises ought to be the development of the necessary skills to make carers under stress better judges of risk. This seems a sensible countermeasure; stress induced distortions are addressed by taking carers out of the flux of everyday anxieties and giving them a problem-solving system for eventual application to their own caring.

However, the system is very complicated, requiring carers to think not only about their own individual placements but also about the network of supporting agencies, and carers might be daunted by the scale of the task. It is easy to imagine some carers turning the exercises into a much less formal *modus operandi* when they get home but this is not what Cairns and Fursland have in mind at all. They place a lot of importance in the record making that tracks and summarizes the entire process and while it is easy to see how that would offer carers protection, it is harder to imagine such detailed analysis and paperwork becoming a routine part of fostering. There may be experienced and skilled carers who would have the organizational ability and motivation to assimilate the demanding processes but there will also be many who do not.

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